County of Athabasca
General Municipal Plan

COUNTY OF ATHABASCA
GENERAL MUNICIPAL PLAN
1986

Plan Printed by: Alberta Municipal Affairs

COUNTY OF ATHABASCA NO. 12
PROVINCE OF ALBERTA
BYLAW NO. 28 - 1986

Being a bylaw to adopt the updated County of Athabasca GENERAL MUNICIPAL PLAN.

WHEREAS Section 61 of the Planning Act R.S.A., 1980 and amendments thereto authorize a municipality to adopt a General Municipal Plan; and

WHEREAS an updated General Municipal Plan has been prepared by the General Municipal Plan Review Committee under the direction of Council; and

WHEREAS the Council of the County of Athabasca requested the assistance of Alberta Municipal Affairs in the preparation of a General Municipal Plan;

NOW THEREFORE the Council of the County of Athabasca, duly assembled, enacts as follows:

1. That Bylaw No 27-1982 adopting the previous General Municipal Plan is hereby repealed;

2. That the COUNTY OF ATHABASCA GENERAL MUNICIPAL PLAN, being the document attached hereto, is hereby adopted.

READ A FIRST TIME, this *16* day of *September* , 1986
READ A SECOND TIME, this *14* day of *October* , 1986
READ A THIRD AND FINAL TIME, this *14* day of *October* , 1986

Reeve

Administrator

COUNTY OF ATHABASCA NO. 12
GENERAL MUNICIPAL PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Ed Alberts (Chairman)
Syd Alexander
Dave Bencharsky
Ron Lewis
Albert Rabin

RESOURCE PERSONS

Charlie Cutforth	County Administrator
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Part 1 ~ Introduction

PART ONE - INTRODUCTION

1. PLAN PURPOSE

A General Municipal Plan represents a set of long term goals and decisions which a municipal council has made addressing future land use change and development within its jurisdiction. The Council of the County of Athabasca has considered it desirable to develop a General Municipal Plan to serve as the policy guideline for planning and co-ordination of development and subdivision in the County.

A General Municipal Plan for the County will help avoid inconsistency in decisionmaking, promote local goals and desires, maximize opportunities and minimize the unexpected. It will also assist Council in rationally addressing such ongoing issues as: loss of good farmland; conflicting farm and non-farm uses; design and location of multi-lot country residential development; hamlet growth and servicing options; and, the accommodation of industrial/commercial development.

It is important to realize that a General Municipal Plan is legally restricted in what it can and cannot address. There are a number of matters such as land ownership, land assessment and taxation, social services programs, highways and oil and natural gas development which have no legal place in the Plan.

Any new land use or development proposal that does not comply with this Plan cannot be considered unless the Plan itself is amended to accommodate that proposal. It is also important to realize that the General Municipal Plan is not retroactive in nature. Land uses in existence prior to adoption of the Plan which do not comply with this Plan, are permitted to continue.

2. PLAN FORMAT

The goal, objectives and policies of this Plan are important as they set the standards of acceptable use, change and development. The Plan goal is established to identify a broad long term ideal which Council wishes to pursue in regards to future land use in the County. The objectives represent more specific aspects of the Plan goal, which in turn, can be achieved through the policy statements identifying specific actions, requirements and standards.

Key words and phrases pertinent to the interpretation of policies contained in this Plan are listed and defined in the "Definitions" section of this Plan. For ease of reference, these key words and phrases have been identified by the use of **bold** type face.

Part 2 ~ Plan Goal

COUNTY OF ATHABASCA NO. 12

PART TWO - PLAN GOAL

1. PLAN GOAL

To develop the agricultural land base within the County of Athabasca while providing opportunity for industrial and economic diversification with well planned growth, change and development.

2. BASIS

The plan goal is based upon an evaluation of various land use issues and concerns facing the County. This goal becomes the guiding principle and foundation of this plan.

A significant amount of land in the County is presently used for agricultural purposes and related rural lifestyles. The Council foresees the agricultural industry as being important to the long term social and economic welfare of the County. However, it is deemed necessary that the plan goal be directed towards promoting the diversification of industry throughout the County. In this manner, an environment will be provided which benefits both the agricultural industry and the community. It is recognized that there are sufficient areas in the County which can accommodate non-agricultural land uses without jeopardizing the agricultural land base. The plan goal therefore, encourages opportunities for well planned non-agricultural growth and development. This will promote a diversification of the County's economic base.

Part 3 ~ Plan Objectives and Policies

COUNTY OF ATHABASCA NO. 12

1.0 AGRICULTURE

INTENT

Agriculture is regarded as an important and critical land use activity in the County of Athabasca. The intent of this objectives/policies section is to promote the long term viability of agriculture. Those land uses not dependent upon productive soils are directed to other areas.

OBJECTIVES

- To minimize the loss of land with agricultural potential, and to discourage where possible, the loss of land with high agricultural capability to non-agricultural land uses.
- To minimize the unnecessary fragmentation of agricultural land.
- To minimize conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural land uses.
- To minimize the negative impact of agricultural operations on the quality of the natural environment.

POLICIES

1.1 Higher capability agricultural land **shall** be considered as a quarter section having at least 50 acres (20 ha) with a farmland assessment productivity rating of 30% or better; or, a quarter section with an averaged Canada Land Inventory agricultural capability rating of at least 100% Class 4 or better soil.

1.2 Lower capability agricultural land **shall** be considered as a quarter section having less than 50 acres (20 ha) with a farmland assessment productivity rating of 30% or better; and, an averaged Canada Land Inventory agricultural capability rating of less than 100% Class 4 soils.

1.3 Within each quarter section, there **shall** be allowed a maximum of 4 parcels, including natural subdivision by registered instrument. Of the 4 parcels, 2 parcels **shall** be a minimum of 3 acres (1.2 ha) and **should** not exceed a maximum of 10 acres (4.0 ha) in size. A third parcel **shall** be a minimum of 20 acres (8.1 ha) and the fourth parcel **shall** be the balance of the original quarter section. It shall be the policy that where a quarter section has been subdivided into two agricultural parcels of approximately equal size (eg. 80 acres (32 ha) ±), one country residential parcel **may** be subdivided out of each agricultural parcel.

1.4 Where agricultural land is taken for roads, rail lines, pipelines, transmission lines, etc., the County **should** endorse only those proposals which minimize the fragmentation of higher capability agricultural land.

1.5 Unless otherwise permitted in this Plan, higher capability agricultural land **should** be preserved for agricultural purposes; uses not dependent upon higher capability agricultural land **should** be directed to lower capability agricultural land.

1.6 The County **shall** not endorse any subdivision of land for **intensive agriculture** purposes unless the application is accompanied by written comments from the **Agricultural Services Board** advising on the feasibility of the proposed use and suitability of the site.

1.7 The County **shall** encourage those interested in establishing a new **intensive livestock operation** or expanding an existing operation to contact the local district agriculturist for advice on facility design, siting and waste management.

1.8 The County **shall** use the Alberta Agriculture Minimum Distance Separation siting formula in the review of any development or subdivision proposal near existing intensive livestock operations.

1.9 The County **shall** encourage the operator of an **intensive livestock operation** to obtain a **Certificate of Compliance** under the Alberta Agriculture and Alberta Environment *Code of Practice* .

1.10 Development agreements **shall** be required as a condition of approval for subdivision of land within the County.

2.0 COUNTRY RESIDENTIAL

INTENT

Country residential development is regarded as a desirable and appropriate residential lifestyle which should be encouraged in the County. It is also recognized that certain locational and site requirements must be met to ensure residential development appropriate to the goal of this Plan. The intent of this objectives/ policies section is to promote country residential development of a planned nature which does not have undesirable impacts on the agricultural economy and community, or the natural environment.

OBJECTIVES

- To direct country residential development to areas where it is most appropriate.
- To minimize the municipal servicing costs to country residential lots through the use of good planning principles.
- To promote country residential development which is compatible with the capabilities and characteristics of the natural environment, and surrounding land uses.
- To allow country residential development at a rate which reflects demand for that lifestyle, and in such a manner that minimizes the amount of land used for this purpose.
- To maintain distinctions between urban and rural residential development.

POLICIES

2.1 Subject to Policy 1.3, two country residential parcels **may** be permitted on each quarter section. Minimum lot size **shall** not be less than 3 acres (1.2 ha) and maximum lot size **should** not exceed 10 acres (4 ha) in size. The parcel **may** exceed 10 acres (4 ha) in size if it can be demonstrated that additional area is required to include shelter belts and farm buildings ancillary to the farmstead.

2.2 Subject to Policy 1.3, one country residential parcel **shall** be permitted on existing subdivided parcels having a minimum area of 20 acres (8.1 ha). Lot size **shall** not be less than 3 acres (1.2 ha) and maximum lot size **shall** not exceed 10 acres (4 ha) in size.

2.3 For the purposes of this Plan, an unsubdivided quarter section **shall** include those quarter sections where a separate title exists for a public utility or institutional use.

2.4 Residential lot sizes in a multi-lot country residential subdivision or development **shall** not be less than 1 acre (0.4 ha) and **shall** not exceed 3 acres (1.2 ha) in size. In those areas within .6 miles (1 km) of a lake, the minimum and maximum lot sizes **may** be varied in accordance with an approved lake management study or area structure plan.

2.5 Development agreements **shall** be required as a condition of approval for country residential subdivision to avoid unreasonable obligations to the municipality as a result of such developments. Where subdivision is not involved, the municipality **should** enter into a development agreement prior to granting a development permit.

2.6 Appropriate setbacks, as determined by Council, **shall** be maintained between country residential subdivisions and adjacent incompatible land uses. In determining appropriate setbacks and/or buffering requirements, the County **should** give due consideration to such factors as the nature and intensity of existing and proposed land uses, and the topography and characteristics of the site.

2.7 Country residential subdivision and development proposed within .6 miles (1 km) of a **lake shall** comply with the following criteria:

(a) the clearing of vegetation on each residential lot **shall** be minimized in order to maintain visual buffers from neighbouring properties and the **lake;**

(b) residential development **shall** not be permitted within 100 feet (30m) of the **lake** shoreline;

(c) the developer **shall** provide public wells as required;

(d) the developer **shall** clear and post all walkways to improve pedestrian access to the **lake;**

(e) the developer **shall** construct boat launching facilities as required and where appropriate to the satisfaction of the County.

(f) the development **shall** , in the opinion of the County, be deemed to be compatible both with existing uses and the overall development capabilities of the **lake** environment.

MULTI-LOT COUNTRY RESIDENTIAL

2.8 **Multi-lot country residential subdivision** and development **shall** be defined, for the purposes of this plan, as more than 2 country residential lots in one location.

2.9 Multi-lot country residential subdivision and development **may** be permitted on higher capability agricultural land.

2.10 The County **shall** not issue a development permit for country residential purposes prior to receiving notification from the appropriate provincial regulatory authorities, indicating that the proposed type of sewage disposal system has been approved.

2.11 Multi-lot country residential subdivision **shall** not be approved by the County unless groundwater of sufficient quantity and quality is available to support both existing and proposed development.

2.12 To facilitate efficient land use and reduce servicing costs, lots within multi-lot country residential subdivisions **should** be clustered where possible. Similarly, multi-lot country residential subdivisions themselves **should** be clustered in close proximity to each other.

2.13 Multi-lot country residential subdivisions **should** be directed to areas which are extensively treed and/or have natural scenic landscape features.

2.14 Where site conditions permit, the alignment of internal roadways and the placement of lots in multi-lot country residential subdivisions **should** be designed in a manner which would maximize the utilization of passive solar energy conservation methods in future building construction.

2.15 In order to encourage the full development of all lots within existing multi-lot country residential subdivisions, the County **shall** consider existing **undeveloped lot** availability when evaluating applications for future multi-lot country residential subdivision.

2.16 In the absence of inter-municipal agreements stating otherwise, multi-lot country residential subdivision **may** be permitted within 2 miles (3.2 km) of the Town of Athabasca and within 1 mile (1.6 km) of the Village of Boyle or an incorporated summer village, if Council is satisfied that the proposed development will not jeopardize the long term viability, growth and expansion of the community affected. Such development proposals **shall** be referred to the affected municipality for comment. In making its decision, Council **should** also consider the possibility or likelihood of the development being eventually annexed by the affected municipality.

MOBILE HOME PA[illegible]

2.17 In addition to the following policies, the development of **mobile home parks shall** comply with Policies 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.9, 2.10, 2.11 and 2.16 of this Section.

2.18 **Mobile home parks shall** be encouraged to locate within easy access of employment opportunities, commercial and community facilities normally required for residential areas.

2.19 **Mobile home parks shall** not be located in hazardous or environmentally sensitive areas. They **shall** be located in areas where soil and drainage conditions can ensure adequate communal water supply and adequate means of communal waste disposal, and where there is no danger of flooding or erosion.

2.20 The County **shall** only recommend the approval of **mobile home parks** which have direct access to public travelled roads.

2.21 When evaluating a proposal for a mobile home park, Council **shall** consider the demands which this development will place on community facilities and services.

3.0 SETTLEMENT EXPANSION

INTENT

It is recognized that incorporated urban settlements and rural hamlet centres within the County serve different roles and functions. The urban municipalities provide a range of commercial, industrial, institutional and residential services whereas the rural hamlets provide a rural residential lifestyle augmented by the convenience of limited local services. While recognizing that growth of settlement areas is desirable, it is also evident that settlement expansion can negatively impact adjacent rural land uses. The intent of this objectives/policies section is to maintain the viability, function and role of existing settlements by coordinating future development and expansion in accordance with the spirit of the Plan goal.

OBJECTIVES

- To ensure where possible, that settlement areas have enough land within their respective boundaries to undertake comprehensive land use planning and development of servicing schemes.
- To ensure that settlement growth and expansion occurs in an effective and orderly manner.
- To encourage growth and expansion of existing settlement areas while discouraging the premature and unnecessary withdrawal of land presently in agricultural production.
- To ensure that lands needed for future settlement expansion are not used prematurely or indiscriminately in a manner that would preclude or significantly increase costs for conversion to urban uses.

POLICIES

RURAL CENTRES

3.1 The function of a Rural Centre **shall** be one of providing residential opportunities augmented with local commercial development and community related services.

3.2 Atmore, Colinton, Donatville, Ellscott, Grassland, Meanook, Perryvale and Rochester **shall** be designated as Rural Centres.

3.3 The County **shall** not recommend the designation of new Rural Centres until an assessment of the impacts of such a designation on the existing Rural Centres has been completed and reviewed by the County and concerned Provincial agencies.

3.4 The Rural Centres of Atmore, Donatville, Ellscott, Meanook and Perryvale **shall** function without future sewage collection and/or water distribution systems until such time as population, economic and environmental circumstances warrant it.

3.5 Future subdivision and development within Rural Centres which may jeopardize existing groundwater supplies or quality or pose problems for sewage disposal **shall** not be permitted.

3.6 Within the Rural Centres of Colinton, Grassland and Rochester, subdivision and development **shall** be at a density which makes most efficient and economical use of the water and sewage servicing systems.

3.7 Once the sewage collection and water distribution systems within the Rural Centres of Colinton, Grassland and Rochester are being used to 65% of their servicing capacity, the County **shall** determine the feasibility of expanding communal services in these communities. Future subdivision and development within these communities **should** be planned and designed to permit replotting at a higher density should expansion of communal systems become feasible.

3.8 Subdivision and development within Rural Centres **shall** be contingent upon site-specific suitability and **shall** not jeopardize the quality of life in the community.

3.9 When 65% of lands within the boundaries of a Rural Centre as established in the Land Use Bylaw have been developed for non-agricultural uses, the County **shall** review the boundaries designated for that Rural Centre. The County **shall** determine what boundary modifications are necessary and appropriate to ensure that the future growth of that community occurs in an economic and efficient manner.

3.10 **Mobile home park** development **may** be permitted within the perimeter of a designated Rural Centre.

3.11 The County **shall** consider the preparation of community plans or area structure plans as a means of facilitating detailed land use planning specific to the needs of individual Rural Centre communities. Any planning document prepared **shall** conform with the provisions of this Plan.

3.12 The County **shall** support efforts to achieve inter-municipal coordination of development and/or annexation of lands adjacent to incorporated settlements.

3.13 The County **shall** not support or endorse incorporated settlement expansion requests onto those County lands which are of higher agricultural capability where alternative lower capability lands are available as defined in this Plan.

4.0 INDUSTRIAL

INTENT

Industrial development in the County has, and will likely continue to occur, in association with the development of the natural resource base of the region. In order to achieve a diversification in the long term economic base of the County, the Plan encourages industrial development in appropriate locations. While recognizing that certain industries may have specific site requirements to meet special needs, the Plan promotes the clustering of compatible industrial uses. The intent of this objectives/policies section is to anticipate and plan for future growth, development and land use change within the industrial sector.

OBJECTIVES

- To minimize municipal costs associated with industrial development.
- To minimize conflicts between industrial developments and existing or future land uses.
- To encourage appropriate industrial development while maintaining high environmental and servicing standards.
- To ensure that land disturbed by resource extraction is returned to its original or better capability prior to disturbance.

GENERAL

4.1 The County **shall** encourage those industries providing products or services directly associated with the agricultural industry;

4.2 The County **shall** restrict to areas outside of existing Rural Centres, those non-labour intensive industries requiring relatively large areas of land, but which have only a minimal requirement for on-site improvements, municipal services and public amenities. Light industrial and manufacturing uses **may** be permitted within a Rural Centre.

4.3 The County **may** permit industries which cannot reasonably be expected to co-exist compatibly with elements of an urban environment.

4.4 Rural industrial subdivision and development **may** only be permitted on lower capability agricultural lands except for industries which, in the opinion of the County, have **unique site requirements** .

4.5 In the absence of inter-municipal agreements stating otherwise, rural industrial subdivision and development **may** be permitted within 2 miles (3.2 km) of the Town of Athabasca and within 1 mile (1.6 km) of the Village of Boyle or an incorporated summer village, if Council is satisfied that the proposed development will not jeopardize the long term viability, growth and expansion of the community affected. Such development proposals **shall** be referred to the affected municipality for comment. In making its decision, Council **should** also consider the possibility or likelihood of the development being eventually annexed by the affected municipality.

4.6 Complementary and ancillary uses related to a **rural industry** , such as offices or product storage, **may** be permitted in association with rural industrial development.

4.7 Industries not considered to have, in the opinion of the County, **unique site requirements** should be located in **rural industrial parks** .

4.8 Rural industrial uses **should** not be located in areas where they are likely to subject residents, hospitals, schools or other noise sensitive uses to high levels of noise.

4.9 Rural industrial uses **shall** not be permitted within the Special Recreation Area, the Integrated Recreation Area and the Athabasca River Corridor as designated on Map 2, unless, in the opinion of the County, **unique site requirements** warrant such development.

4.10 The establishment of **rural industrial parks** shall be directed to areas suited to industrial development, considering such factors as soil, drainage, slope, availability of necessary services and capacity of existing transportation systems.

4.11 In order to accommodate and encourage a mix of rural industries within a rural industrial park, parcel sizes **should** be varied, but **shall** have a minimum parcel size of 1 acre (0.4 ha).

4.12 Industries that present a hazard to other **rural industrial park** users or demand **unique site requirements should** be permitted to locate independently at other acceptable locations in the County.

4.13 Any proposal for a new industrial development or expansion of an existing industrial development, **should** contain an identification of all costs associated with providing new services and upgrading existing services and facilities made necessary by that development. The apportionment of cost **shall** be negotiated by the County and appear in a development agreement before a development permit is issued.

4.14 All industries **shall** obtain approvals and permits required by Provincial legislation and a development permit from the County.

4.15 Appropriate buffers **shall** be provided between industries and other existing and future incompatible land uses. The expansion potential of the industry **should** be considered in determining the required buffer.

RESOURCE EXTRACTION INDUSTRIES

4.16 The developer of a resource extraction industry or activity **shall** be required at the time of application for a development permit, to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the County, that all necessary provincial permits and approvals pertinent to the development have been obtained.

4.17 A development permit for a resource extraction operation **should** only be issued when it has been shown that a development and reclamation plan has been prepared to the satisfaction of the County, and which adequately addresses such items as:

(a) the sequence and extent of development;

(b) the proposed use of land after the development has been concluded;

(c) whether the area contains higher capability agricultural land;

(d) any anticipated interference with surface or subsurface water;

(e) any anticipated impact on fish and wildlife habitat;

(f) the measures to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts identified in (d) and (e);

(g) whether the area contains potential historic resources.

4.18 Any development and reclamation plan submitted to the County **should** ensure that:

(a) the land can be returned to its original or better agricultural productivity using similar inputs as before the development occurred;

(b) in the case of river and lake shoreland areas, the land can be reclaimed to its original or better (higher) recreation capability;

(c) in the case of potential negative impact on surface or subsurface water, or on fish or wildlife habitats, the mitigative measures proposed are likely to be successful.

4.19 All **resource extraction industries** , unless exempted by the Planning Act, **shall** enter into a development agreement with the County.

4.20 Before a local development permit is issued, the County **may** require the proponent of a resource extraction development to post a performance bond or similar security for the purpose of ensuring reclamation is completed where no similar requirement is made by a provincial department.

4.21 **Resource extraction industries** or activities **shall** be, where possible, located on lower capability agricultural lands.

4.22 Development permits for sand, gravel, clay or marl extraction **shall** not be issued until the necessary Development and Reclamation Approval is obtained in accordance with the Land Surface Conservation and Reclamation Act.

4.23 Development permits for gravel extraction **should** be issued on the basis of whether the proposed use will fully and efficiently utilize the capability of the deposit. Deposits suitable for construction aggregates **should** be reserved for that use.

4.24 Land which is underlain by a commercial deposit of gravel **should** not be used for other purposes which would prevent subsequent extraction until the deposit has been removed and the land has been reclaimed.

5.0 COMMERCIAL

INTENT

Commercial development within the County is located in either the rural centres or adjacent to highway and secondary road systems. The intent of this objectives/policies section is to promote commercial development which reflects accessibility, cost efficiency, convenience, safety and land use compatibility. In this manner the servicing needs of both the highway travelling public and the local area residents may be met.

OBJECTIVES

- To minimize municipal costs associated with commercial development.
- To minimize conflicts between commercial development and existing or future land uses.
- To encourage appropriate commercial development while maintaining high environmental and servicing standards.

POLICIES

5.1 Highway commercial and general commercial **shall** be the two forms of commercial use which may be permitted.

5.2 Highway commercial uses **shall** refer to those uses established adjacent to primary highways or secondary roads, in order to provide only the most common and regular service requirements of the highway travelling public. Such uses would include service stations, bulk oil sales, restaurants, motels and campsites.

5.3 General commercial uses **shall** refer to those uses which service the farm and Rural Centre population. Such uses would include retail and wholesale sales and services, restaurants, offices, financial and entertainment services. In certain situations, as determined by Council, institutional, light industrial and manufacturing uses **may** be considered.

5.4 General commercial uses **shall** only be permitted in Rural Centres and existing areas of general commercial use, unless it can be demonstrated that there is justifiable reason and need for such use in another location.

5.5 The subdivision of land for new highway commercial or general commercial uses **may** be permitted on higher capability agricultural land.

5.6 Prior to approving any new development for highway commercial use, the County **shall** consult with Alberta Transportation.

5.7 The County **shall** encourage those highway and general commercial uses which:

(a) are not obnoxious or detrimental to existing development;

(b) do not require a standard of services which the municipality is unable or unwilling to provide;

(c) will not utilize higher capability agricultural land or jeopardize the quality of the natural environment.

5.8 Proposals for highway or general commercial development **should** be subject to a development agreement between the developer and the County to set out the party responsible for the construction and maintenance of municipal servicing facilities, access roads, etc., necessary for the development.

5.9 The County **may** , prior to approving any new developments for either highway or general commercial use, require the preparation and adoption of an area structure plan for the subject land which:

(a) defines the boundaries of the proposal;

(b) defines standards of development which may include architecture, landscaping and sign control;

(c) outlines servicing requirements, methods and costs;

(d) includes groundwater and soil permeability tests;

(e) in the case of highway commercial development, ensures that the functional integrity of the adjacent highway is maintained through the use of service road systems and/or controlled highway access points.

6.0 TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES

INTENT

The development of transportation and utility systems can have a significant impact on land use change within the County. However, certain types of transportation and utility development are beyond the direct control of the local municipality. The intent of this objectives/policies section is to provide policies which encourage compatible, economic and efficient service and utility related development.

OBJECTIVES

- To minimize any negative impacts associated with the development of linear transportation, communication, or utility facilities and services.
- To ensure that necessary facilities, utilities, or services associated with land use and development are provided and in place when required.
- To ensure that land use and development in the vicinity of existing or proposed transportation, communication or utility facilities/services is regulated such that it does not interfere with their operation, upgrading or future expansion.
- To ensure that municipal services and utilities are provided in an economical, efficient manner and are reflective of need, environmental constraints, land use considerations and existing infrastructures.

POLICIES

GENERAL

6.1 The County **shall** encourage the location of transportation and utility lines and facilities in a manner which:

(a) minimizes the consumption of higher capability agricultural land;

(b) encourages the integration of transportation routes and utility lines within defined corridors;

(c) encourages rights of way to follow quarter section lines, property boundaries or existing easements;

(d) discourages the creation of fragmented parcels of land between rights of way;

(e) minimizes the impacts on significant recreational, historical or wildlife resource areas.

6.2 Where proposed transportation and utility lines and facilities may adversely affect adjacent lands or land uses, the County **shall** recommend such buffering as deemed appropriate to minimize any negative impacts.

6.3 The County **may** require future subdivision or development proposals adjacent to transportation and utility lines and facilities to provide such buffering as deemed appropriate.

6.4 The County **shall** encourage new transportation and utility rights of way to avoid existing residential areas and areas designated for urban expansion. Where such lines must locate in close proximity to residential or urban areas, they **should** be designed to be compatible with future urban growth.

6.5 The County **shall** develop and implement a program of maintenance and improvement for the secondary and collector road system in the County.

6.6 The County **shall** endeavor to co-operate with other municipalities in the planning and development of intermunicipal roadways.

6.7 New roads created by dedication or subdivision **shall** only be assumed by the municipality after they have been constructed to a standard which is acceptable to the County.

6.8 The County **shall** encourage those involved in the exploration and development of natural resources to construct access roads on road allowances wherever possible.

6.9 Direct access from private property onto either primary highways or secondary roads **shall** be discouraged and limited wherever possible.

6.10 The County **shall** endeavor to co-operate wherever appropriate with other municipalities and/or the provincial government in the planning, development and operation of sanitary waste disposal facilities and sewage lagoons.

AIRPORT VICINITY

6.11 In order to minimize safety hazards and land use conflicts around airports, the County **shall** encourage the adoption of **Airport Vicinity Protection Area (A.V.P.A.) Regulations** for all publicly licensed and paved airports in the County.

6.12 Until A.V.P.A. regulations are enacted, the following criteria **shall** apply to subdivision and development near all licensed airports (Map 1):

(a) multi-lot residential subdivision and development **shall** be prohibited on land located within the 30 **Noise Exposure Forecast Contour** or higher;

(b) developments which will cause a concentration of people (such as schools, libraries, nursing homes and hospitals), **shall** be prohibited from land located within the 30 **Noise Exposure Forecast Contour** or higher;

7.0 RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

INTENT

The County of Athabasca is characterized by a relative abundance of resources which are ideally suited for a variety of outdoor recreation activities. In anticipation of increasing use pressures on these resources, it is the intent of this objectives/policies section to encourage diversified recreational development appropriate to the capabilities of these resources and the intent of the Plan goal.

OBJECTIVES

- To provide a diversity in recreation opportunities.
- To provide recreation development which is compatible with the capabilities and characteristics of the natural environment, and surrounding land uses.
- To ensure that higher capability agricultural land will not be lost to recreation development.
- To provide for the comprehensive management of recreation opportunities on lake and river shoreland areas.
- To ensure that high quality recreation resources are not jeopardized through premature or incompatible development.
- To encourage quality development of outdoor recreation resources as a means of promoting tourism in the County.

POLICIES

RECREATION AREA DESIGNATION

7.1 The Special Recreation Area, the Integrated Recreation Area and the Athabasca River Corridor **shall** be established as designated on Map 2.

7.2 The Special Recreation Area **shall** refer to those lands suited for specialized **public-serving recreation uses** and including those areas with: the majority of land area owned by the Province; potential for public serving recreational development; existing specialized public serving development; lands within approximately .6 miles (1 km) of a **lake** ; and, as defined on Map 2.

7.3 Within the Special Recreation Area the predominant land uses **shall** be specialized **public-serving recreation uses** such as organized campgrounds, day use areas, picnic site lodges, hiking and skiing trails, and other similar uses as developed by either private or public interests. Notwithstanding, **wilderness uses shall** be the only uses permitted on lands adjacent to Hope Lake. No further expansion of the existing development infrastructure at the County of Athabasca Recreation Area at Hope Lake (SE33-65-18-W4) **shall** be permitted.

7.4 The Integrated Recreation Area **shall** refer to those lands with regionally significant recreation resources and the capability to compatibly accommodate both recreational and country residential development; and, including those lands with existing **public-serving recreation development** and multi-lot country residential development and located within approximately .6 miles (1 km) of a **lake** ; or, as otherwise delineated by an area structure plan; and, as defined on Map 2.

7.5 Within the Integrated Recreation Area a compatible mix of country residential development and **public-serving recreation development shall** be the predominant land use. Non-agricultural development **should** be directed to lower capability agricultural land.

7.6 The Athabasca River Corridor **shall** refer to those lands with significant recreation, wildlife and economic resources located within the Athabasca River valley. This area generally includes: all lands adjacent to the Athabasca River, extending back to the major valley break corresponding with the 1875 foot (572m) contour interval; or, in areas where the major valley break is less defined, the maximum setback of this corridor from the river is generally .6 miles (1 km); and, as defined on Map 2.

7.7 Within the Athabasca River Corridor, a compatible mix of **public-serving recreation development** , wildlife conservation and agricultural activity **shall** be the predominant land use. The following conditions **shall** apply to future development within this corridor:

(a) **Public-serving recreational development shall** be encouraged;

(b) Land use and development **should** not jeopardize or preclude any future possibilities of developing a natural **open space** and recreation corridor system adjacent to the river;

(c) Structures which could be damaged by flooding or land uses that would significantly impede flood waters **should** locate outside the 1 in 100 year floodplain;

(d) Development proposals **may** be evaluated by the County using the Alberta Environment Land Conservation Guidelines;

(e) Multi-lot country residential subdivision and development **shall** not be permitted;

GENERAL

7.8 All recreational development **shall** be designed to fit into the surrounding natural landscape, particularly in terms of siting, scale and visual impact.

7.9 Recreational development **shall** not exceed, in the opinion of the County, the physical and social carrying capacities of the site and adjacent areas to support such use.

7.10 Recreational development **shall** be required to install, where necessary and appropriate, adequate onsite water supply systems and sewage disposal systems which have been approved by the authority having jurisdiction. Such systems **shall** be of sufficient size to accommodate the anticipated number of users during the peak use period of the recreational facilities.

7.11 Spaces for day use, picnicing, camping and similar activities **shall** be suitably organized and clearly marked. Adequate **lake** access and parking facilities **shall** be provided where appropriate.

7.12 Developments **shall** be required to maintain an **open space** buffer of sufficient size and composition to act as a noise and visual barrier from adjacent incompatible land uses.

7.13 The clearing of vegetation or alteration of land for recreational development within 100 feet (30m) of a lake or river shoreline **shall** be minimized in order to maintain aesthetic and environmental buffers. A site plan detailing the protection of existing treed areas and site topography **shall** be required with any application for recreational subdivision or development.

7.14 The County **shall** encourage the development of additional public serving recreation opportunities and facilities.

7.15 The County **shall** encourage the regional recreation board to prepare and complete a comprehensive, long range recreation master plan which will address the recreational needs and desires of County residents, and which is compatible with the goal and objectives of this Plan.

7.16 The County **shall** , through the regional and County recreation boards, continue an active program for the provision, upkeep and improvement of recreational areas and facilities to meet the recreational needs and desires of County residents.

7.17 The County **shall** support inter-municipal co-operation in the development of community serving facilities related to recreation, culture and entertainment.

LAKE DEVELOPMENT

7.18 The County's overriding principle **shall** be that **lakes** are a public resource, and that lakeshore development shall not be allowed to restrict the long-term use of **lakes** by the public.

7.19 The County in consultation with Alberta Municipal Affairs **may** require the preparation of lake management studies and area structure plans where it is deemed appropriate.

7.20 All lake management studies **shall** be prepared in accordance with the Alberta Planning Board Guidelines.

7.21 When a lake management study or area structure plan has been prepared and adopted by the County, all subdivision and development **shall** proceed in conformance with the policies of that plan.

RESERVE PARCELS

7.22 Adequate public reserves **shall** be dedicated in country residential subdivisions adjacent to **lake** shorelands so as to provide adequate **lake** access.

7.23 Municipal reserve dedications **should** be concentrated in a few large parcels on suitable sites, rather than scattered throughout the area of subdivision.

7.24 In order to provide for more suitable, larger areas for municipal recreation uses and facilities, the County **should** consolidate and acquire land in areas most suited for public use.

7.25 Reserves within a subdivision **shall** , where possible, be designed to connect with nearby public land or with reserves in adjacent subdivisions.

7.26 The County, in cooperation with the County recreation board, **shall** pursue a program of documenting and evaluating all existing municipal reserve parcels with a view to consolidating and developing high quality municipal recreation facilities. This **may** be achieved in part through the disposition of existing reserve parcels, trading land or by taking money in place of reserves and using this to purchase land.

OPEN SPACE AREAS

7.27 Unless **unique site requirements** determine otherwise (e.g. ski slope development or peat extraction operations), development **shall** not be permitted:

(a) on steep slopes (in excess of 15°);

(b) on unstable slopes or lands characterized by soil instability;

(c) on lands exhibiting evidence of poor drainage or flooding.

7.28 Unless **unique site requirements** determine otherwise, development proposals **should** conform with the Alberta Environment Land Conservation Guidelines so far as they pertain to setback requirements from valley breaks, ravines and watercourses.

7.29 All development **shall** be designed to retain buffer strips between roads and water bodies, ravines, watercourses and bog areas so as to prevent soil erosion and siltation of streams.

7.30 Development **shall** not be permitted in hazard land areas, or areas characterized by inherent physical characteristics which pose severe limitations to development.

8.0 WILDLIFE

INTENT

The County of Athabasca is relatively rich in terms of wildlife resources. The physical characteristics of this area have created regionally significant habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, moose and white-tailed deer. The Plan recognizes that human activity and development can place varying degrees of pressure on the viability of the County's wildlife resources. The intent of this objectives/policies section is to guide land use and development in a manner which maintains and complements as much as possible, the critical wildlife habitat areas within the County.

OBJECTIVES

- To identify and protect from incompatible uses those critical wildlife habitat areas which are necessary to the maintenance of viable populations of certain species of fish and wildlife.
- To ensure that land use, development and growth within the County will proceed in a manner which maintains and complements as much as possible the characteristics and qualities of the natural environment.
- To promote wildlife management as a means of developing the recreation/tourism potential of the County.
- To prevent, where possible, conflicts between wildlife and other land uses.

POLICIES

8.1 **Critical wildlife resources** constitute those areas either designated as such in this Plan (Map 3), or as determined by the Fish and Wildlife Division of Alberta Energy and Natural Resources.

8.2 Subdivision proposals within .6 miles (1 km) of a designated waterfowl habitat or nesting area; or, within a designated ungulate wintering range; **shall** be referred by the County to the Fish and Wildlife Division of Alberta Energy and Natural Resources for comment and review. At the discretion of the development officer, development proposals **shall** also be subject to this referral process.

8.3 The County **shall** consult with the Water Resources Division of Alberta Environment prior to approving any non-agricultural development proposals which involve the draining of sloughs or wetland areas.

8.4 Subdivision or development **may** be permitted within or immediately adjacent to a critical wildlife resource area only when it can be proven to the satisfaction of the County that the proposed subdivision or development will not jeopardize or significantly damage those characteristics of the resource vital to habitat and species maintenance.

8.5 Subdivision or development proposals within or immediately adjacent to a designated **critical wildlife resource** shall ensure that disturbance of treed areas and alterations to site topography are minimized. The County shall require a site plan detailing the protection of existing treed areas and site topography with any application for subdivision or development.

8.6 Alterations to the bed and shores of waterbodies within the County **shall** not be undertaken without the necessary authorization and/or permits from the appropriate provincial government agencies.

9.0 HISTORIC RESOURCES

INTENT

The County of Athabasca is situated within one of the more complex archaeological areas in northeast Alberta, in which a significant number of historic sites and artifacts are believed to be located. More recent historical resources include the Athabasca Landing Trail which represents one of the most regionally and perhaps provincially significant historical resources located in the County. It is therefore, the intent of this objectives/policies section to promote the identification and conservation of the County's archaeological, cultural and historic heritage.

OBJECTIVES

- To avoid the unnecessary disturbance of all historic resources.
- To utilize the historic resources in the County as a basis for promoting recreation and tourism.

POLICIES

9.1 The County **shall** encourage and support the efforts of public or private agencies in the acquisition, restoration, preservation, conservation or interpretation of **historic resources** in the County.

9.2 The County **may** consider designating valuable historic sites and buildings within the County as Municipal Historic Sites, where it considers such action to be in the public interest.

9.3 In consultation with the Historic Resources Division of Alberta Culture, the County **shall** develop criteria for the purpose of determining and maintaining an inventory of buildings, structures or sites which have historical, cultural or architectural value in the County.

9.4 Any subdivision proposal involving more than 10 acres (4 ha), **shall** be referred by the County to the Archaeological Survey of Alberta Culture to determine if a Historical Resources Impact Assessment shall be required. Under the direction of Alberta Culture, the developer **shall** be responsible for conducting studies and proposing any mitigative measures in areas where the proposal would destroy or alter the historic resource.

TAWATINAW HERITAGE CORRIDOR

9.5 The Tawatinaw Heritage Corridor **shall** be established, as designated on Map 4, as comprising those areas which by virtue of their locational, agricultural, historical, recreational, natural or aesthetic qualities contribute to the heritage of the Athabasca Landing Trail and the Tawatinaw Valley. This corridor includes that area of land adjacent to the Tawatinaw River and generally extending back to the major valley break, but also including the Athabasca Landing Trail.

9.6 Subdivision and development **shall** be co-ordinated and designed so as to minimize any conflicts with, or negative impacts on, the natural, cultural and historical features of the area.

9.7 Subdivision design and development **shall** ensure that disturbance of treed areas and alterations to site topography are minimized. The County shall require a site plan detailing the protection of existing treed areas and site topography with any application for subdivision or development.

9.8 All subdivision proposals **shall** be referred by the County to the Fish and Wildlife Division of Alberta Energy and Natural Resources for comment and review. At the discretion of the development officer, development proposals **shall** also be subject to this referral process.

9.9 The establishment of any future country residential development **shall** be on a gradual and controlled basis, so as to minimize any negative impact on area wildlife.

9.10 Any future country residential development **should** concentrate around existing developed areas so as to minimize additional loss of habitat areas.

9.11 Any development proposal on lands adjacent to the surveyed Athabasca Landing Trail **may** , at the discretion of the development officer, be referred to Alberta Culture for comment.

9.12 The County **shall** encourage Alberta Culture, Alberta Tourism and other appropriate agencies to facilitate the dedication of the Athabasca Landing Trail as a provincially historic site; and develop the cultural, historic, recreation and tourism potential associated with the landing trail corridor.

Part 4 ~ Administration

PART FOUR - ADMINISTRATION

1. AUTHORITY OF THE PLAN

1.1 Pursuant to Section 61 of the Planning Act R.S.A. 1980, this Plan shall be adopted by County of Athabasca No. 12, as the County of Athabasca No. 12 General Municipal Plan.

1.2 Subdivision and development of lands within the County of Athabasca shall be in accordance with the provisions of this Plan. The term "development" as used in the context of this Plan, shall only refer to that development as defined in the County's Land Use Bylaw which requires a development permit.

1.3 Council shall encourage the Provincial and Federal governments to have regard for the provisions of this Plan in the development and re-development of Crown lands, and in the formulation of Provincial and Federal policies and programs, within the County of Athabasca.

2. LAND USE BYLAW

2.1 Where this Plan or any part thereof takes effect, the Land Use Bylaw in effect in the County of Athabasca thereby shall be amended to conform with this Plan.

2.2 No provisions of this Plan shall require the Land Use Bylaw to pre-designate lands for hamlet and/or urban expansion, commercial, industrial, resource extraction, multi-lot country residential, mobile home park, recreation, institutional or other similar uses.

3. AMENDMENT

3.1 Should changing conditions necessitate an amendment to the Plan, in accordance with Section 139 of the Planning Act, the amendment shall be adopted by bylaw.

3.2 In order to ensure that a proper evaluation is made of the impact of a proposed amendment on the goal, objectives and policies of the Plan; the following criteria shall apply to consideration of an amendment:

(a) a formal request for amendment shall be submitted to Council;

(b) the request shall be in the form of a written brief demonstrating the implications and relationship of the proposed amendment with respect to the goal, intent, objectives and policies of the Plan;

(c) Council during deliberation on the proposed amendment may refer the request to such agencies as it considers necessary for comment;

(d) Council may request such information as it deems necessary to reach a decision on the proposed amendment.

(e) Council may proceed to amend the Plan.

4. REVIEW

4.1 The planning process is a dynamic process, subject to inevitable change. With this Plan being a major component in the County planning process, it is intended that this Plan will be subject to periodic review. Review of the Plan may be initiated in the following ways:

(a) a complete or partial review due to economic, social, or technical developments or environmental considerations;

(b) a complete review upon the election of a new Council or at least once every three years; or

(c) a complete or partial review as a result of a Plan amendment request.

5. MONITORING

5.1 Essential to the continued effectiveness, viability and relevance of the Plan is the mechanism of monitoring. Monitoring entails recording and appraising the significance of events, trends and decisions, in relation to the Plan.

5.2 This Plan is based on a set of assumptions, goals and objectives, many of which relate to the future. Over a period of time any one or more of these may change. It is the intent of this Plan to promote the development of formalized procedures and techniques to monitor the changes in the County's land use, development and growth patterns.

5.3 This monitoring in combination with the review and amendment processes will form the key elements in ensuring the long term relevancy of the Plan to changing County aspirations and needs.

5.4 In order to monitor events, trends and decisions pertinent to this Plan, the County may establish by itself, or in conjunction with Alberta Municipal Affairs, a system of recording such information as: development applications and decisions; subdivision applications and decisions; location of approved subdivision and development; "development within subdivision"; and, municipal servicing expenditures/tax revenues associated with subdivision and development.

6. REFERRALS

6.1 In order to expedite the delivery of referral comments as required by certain policies contained in this Plan, Alberta Municipal Affairs may be requested to assist in ensuring the timely requesting, co-ordination and delivery of appropriate referral comments to both the County and the Subdivision Approving Authority.

Part 5 ~ Definitions

PART FIVE - DEFINITIONS

The following definitions have been compiled to assist the reader in the interpretation of this Plan. Where a definition has not been provided for in this Plan, the Planning Act and the County Land Use Bylaw shall be used, where appropriate, for interpretation purposes.

"Agricultural Production" means extensive and intensive agricultural uses and activities involving the production of feed grains, cereal grains, forage crops, specialty crops, livestock and other animals on a commercial basis. It shall also mean the agricultural product storage, service facilities and farmsteads which relate to the individual farm unit.

"Agricultural Services Board" means a committee of the Council of the County of Athabasca, augmented by the District Agriculturist and the County Agricultural Fieldman, who both serve in an advisory role to the Committee. The purpose of the committee is to discuss and review a wide range of matters relating to agricultural activity within the County.

"Certificate of Compliance" means an agreement between the owner/ operator of livestock facility and Alberta Agriculture and Alberta Environment, which verifies that the confinement livestock facility is considered to be in substantial compliance with the requirements of the "Confinement Livestock Facilities Waste Management Code of Practice".

"Critical Wildlife Resources" means those areas identified largely by the Fish and Wildlife Division of Alberta Energy and Natural Resources as being critical and vital to the maintenance of area wildlife. These areas could change over time as environmental and habitat changes occur. The updating and designation of critical wildlife areas will be an ongoing process.

"Airport Vicinity Protection Area (A.V.P.A.) Regulations" means a planning document pursuant to Section 147 of the Planning Act that provides for compatible land uses in close proximity to publicly licensed and paved aircraft landing strips. Objectives of this document are to minimize adverse impacts of aircraft operations on the surrounding community and to maintain the continued viability of the airport facility at its fullest efficiency.

"Historic Resource" means any work of nature or man, that is primarily of interest for its palaeontological, prehistorical, historical, cultural, natural, scientific or aesthetic value including but not limited to, a paleontological, prehistorical, historical or natural site, structure or object, or as otherwise defined in the Alberta Historical Resources Act.

"Intensive Agriculture" means a commercial agricultural operation other than intensive livestock operations which, due to the nature of the operation, require smaller tracts of land. Without restricting the generality of the foregoing, this shall include nurseries, greenhouses, kennels, and sod farms.

"Intensive Livestock Operation" means any confinement livestock facility capable of confining, rearing, or feeding livestock at a housing density of more than one animal unit per 300 square metres (3230 sq. ft.), and is occupied at least 90 consecutive days per year.

"Lake" means a body of water, free from large quantities of aquatic vegetation, and characterized by relatively large open water (limnetic) and deep water (profundal) zones compared with the shore (littoral) zone; and, as defined by the Council of the County of Athabasca.

"May" is a operative word meaning a choice is available, with no particular direction or guidance intended.

"Mobile Home Park" means a parcel of land under single ownership which has been planned and divided into rentable spaces or lots for the long term parking and occupancy of mobile homes; and has been improved for the long term accommodation of mobile homes.

"Multi-Lot Country Residential Subdivision" means more than 2 country residential lots in one location.

"Open Space" means land and water areas which are retained in an essentially undeveloped state and often serve one or more of the following uses: conservation of land resources; ecological protection; recreation purposes; historic or scenic purposes; enhancement of community values and safety; maintenance of future land use options.

"Public-Serving Recreation Uses" means organized campgrounds, day use areas, picnic sites, lodges, hiking and skiing trails and other similar uses as developed by either private or public interests.

"Resource Extraction Industry" means an industry engaged in the extraction of natural resources such as clay, sand, gravel, coal and other minerals including petroleum and natural gas, and which may include the processing of these through primary treatment into a raw marketable form.

"Rural Industrial Park" is a development consisting of two or more lots designed and approved for industrial uses for which communal water and/or sewer service is not required and which would constitute the major use of a quarter section of land.

"Rural Industry" means an industry involving:

(a) the initial processing or storage of farm products which because of odor, noise or inflammable material require large tracts of land for environmental protection, or;

(b) warehousing or storage of material, goods and equipment, or;

(c) natural resource processing industries whose location is tied to the resource, or;

(d) provision of large scale transportation facilities for freight or passengers, or;

(e) industrial operations which due to noise, inherent safety hazards or noxious or toxic emissions require large tracts of land or a rural location away from a concentration of people.

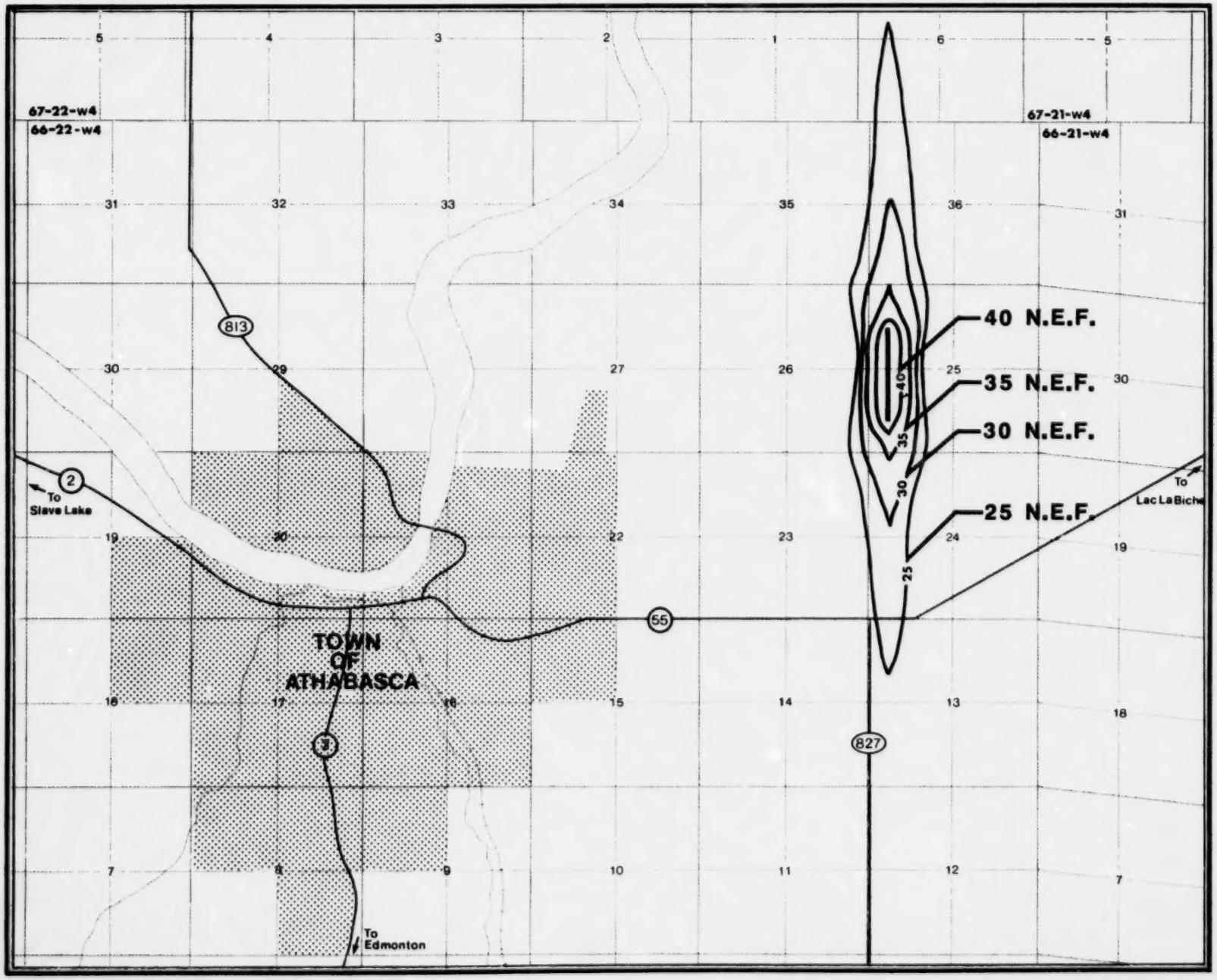
"Shall" is an operative word which means the action is obligatory.

"Should" is an operative work which means that, in order to achieve local goals and objectives it is strongly advised that the action be taken. Exceptions shall be made only under extenuating circumstances.

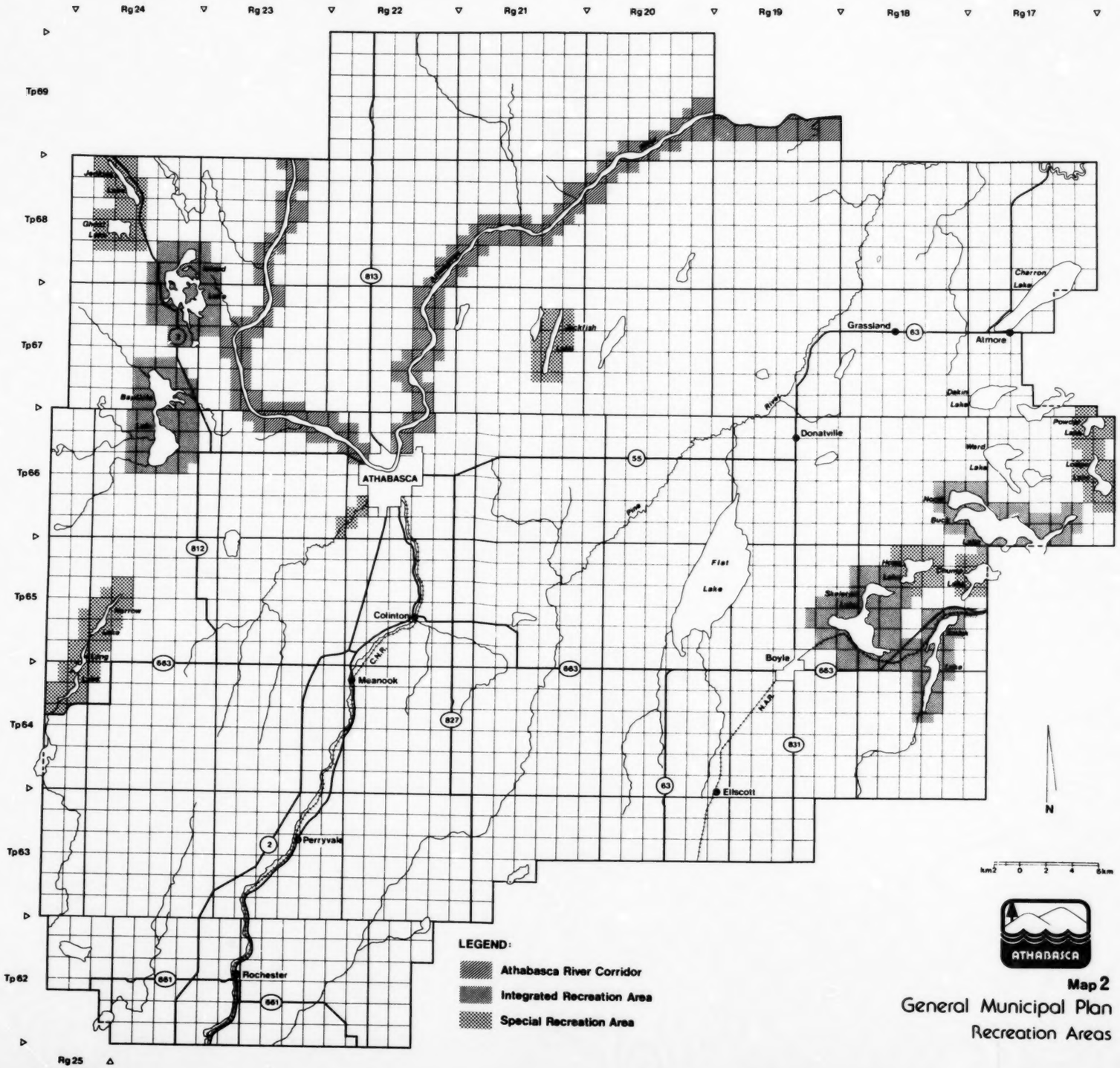
"Undeveloped Lot" means a lot which does not contain a residence, building or structure anchored on a permanent foundation.

"Unique Site Requirements" are a set of site locational requirements which have been demonstrated to the County's satisfaction to be necessary in order for a commercial or industrial development to be carried out.

"Wilderness Uses" are defined as including but not limited to hiking, cross country skiing, skidooing, pleasure all terrain vehicle activities (ATV), nature observations and activities of like manner to those listed.



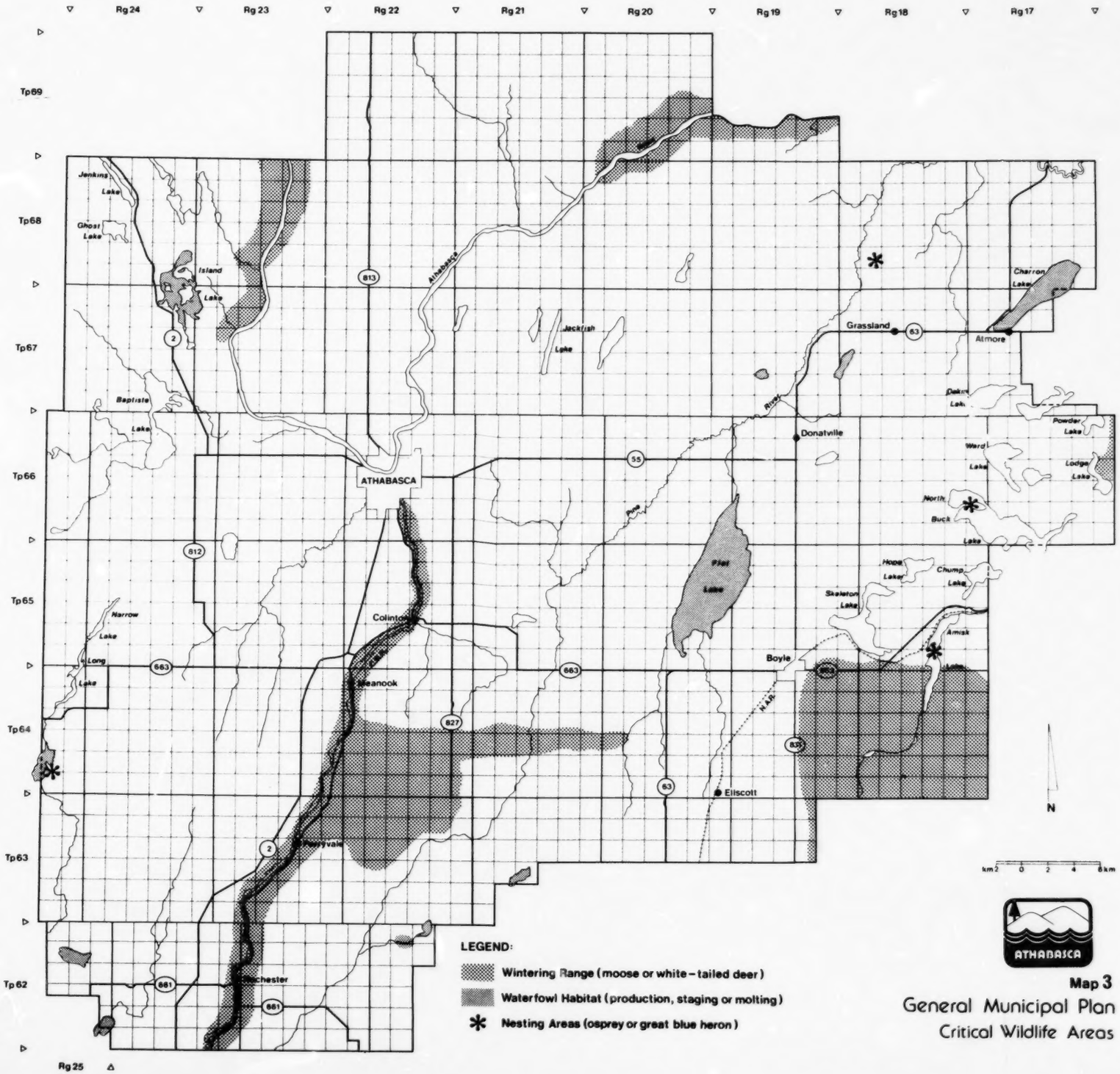
Map 1 Athabasca Airport Vicinity Protection Area
Noise Exposure Forecast Contours



Map 2

General Municipal Plan

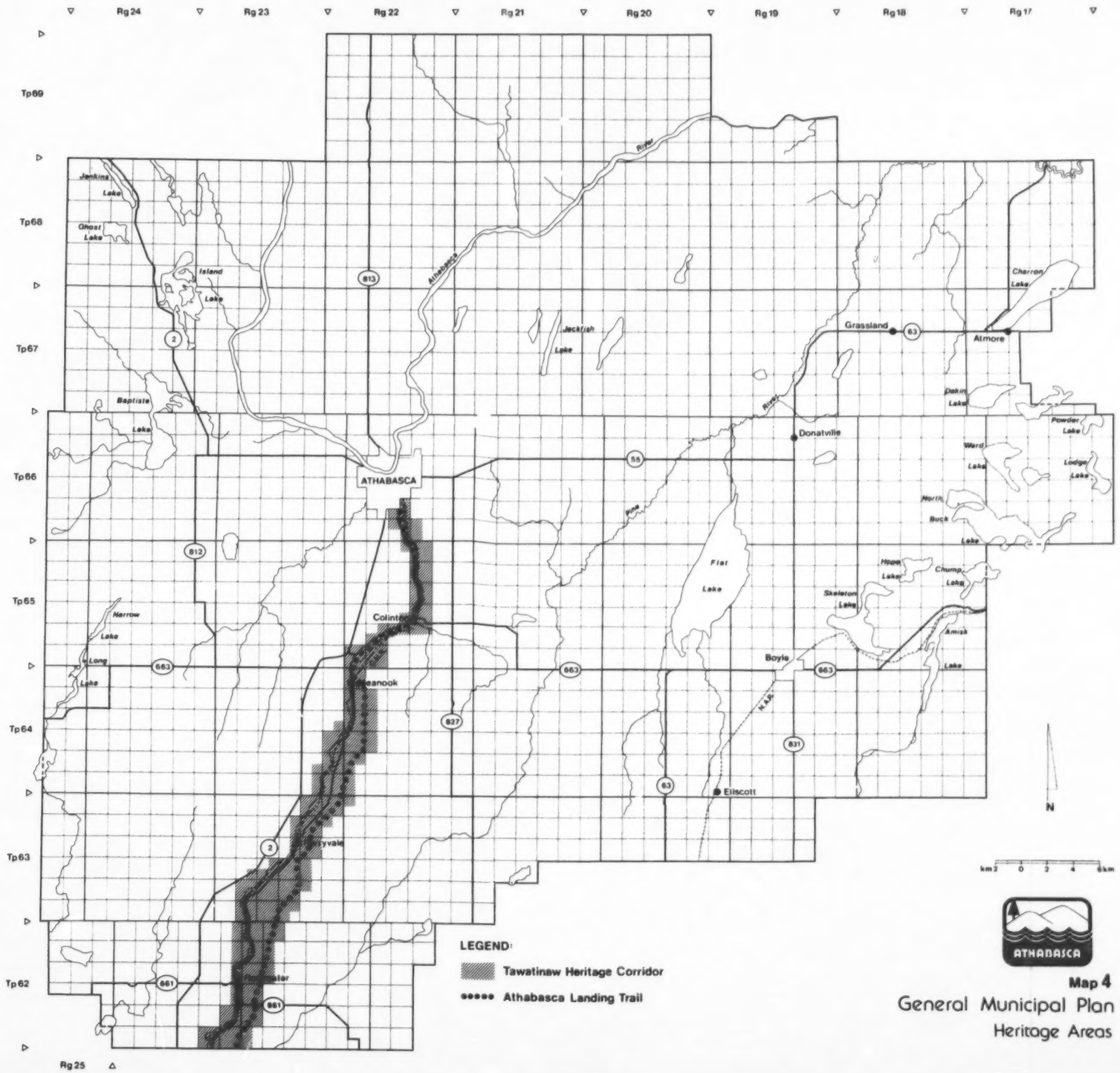
Recreation Areas



Map 3

General Municipal Plan

Critical Wildlife Areas



Map 4

General Municipal Plan

Heritage Areas